

reasons which will be set forth below, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner withdraws the rejection to the claims and allows the claims to issue.

Applicants respectfully point out that the U.S. filing date of *Caci* is December 14, 1998. However, applicants claim priority to Japanese Application 9-19412 filed January 31, 1997 and JP 9-21591 filed February 4, 1997, both well before the filing date of *Caci*. Therefore, *Caci* is not a proper reference. Attached to this Response are certified translations of applicants' Japanese priority documents.

Since *Caci* is not a proper reference, applicants respectfully request the Examiner withdraws the rejection to claims 1-20 under 35 U.S.C. §103.

Thus it now appears that the application is in condition for reconsideration and allowance. Reconsideration and allowance at an early date are respectfully requested.

If for any reason the Examiner feels that the application is not now in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact, by telephone, the applicants' undersigned attorney at the indicated telephone number to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed within the currently set shortened statutory period, applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such extension of time may be charged to our Deposit Account No. 02-4800.

In the event that any additional fees are due with this paper, please charge our  
Deposit Account No. 02-4800.

Respectfully submitted,

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